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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development**

# Written statement* submitted by The Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[25 May 2015]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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# Internally Displaced People

Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD) would like to express appreciation for the efforts of non-governmental organisations, inter-governmental organisations and good-hearted individuals that have exerted all their efforts in helping the less fortunate, especially Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). They are an example of hard work and dedication, and therefore, we call on governments to work, hand in hand with civil society, to support their work on the ground, particularly on sheltering, clothing, and feeding Internally Displaced Persons.

In the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacements, IDPs are people or groups of people who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border. But at GNRD, we believe this definition should also include refugee camps situated on the internationally recognised borders or in their vicinity. Failure to include this definition will have legal ramifications, transferring full responsibility of IDPS on the host countries, when in fact, this should be a collective responsibility of the international community.

The Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD), in the past few years, has visited, provided relief and documented the situation in refugee camps where IDPs end up. GNRD has provided reports and released findings on the deplorable situation in many areas, such as Cyber City camp, and Al-Zaatari camp.

In fact, only IDPs that are considered lucky have reached refugee camps. Our colleagues have been approached by many inhabitants in these camps to tell us that members of their families and loved ones are stuck in conflict zones, unable to find refuge or even the basic necessities of life. To reach these camps is to reach safety, and throughout these IDPs' journeys' to these camps, many die from disease, hunger and even become targets in conflict.

GNRD believes that there is a correlation between armed conflict and the number of IDPs. The world community has seen an increase in the number of IDPs in the past few years as more civil conflicts have led to exacerbated violence. According to conservative estimates by the United Nations Refugee Agency, the numbers of IDPs have increased from 17 million in 1997 to an even more unacceptable number of IDPs, reaching 38 million 2014. According to current calculations based on this information, the rate of IDPs will increase by 1.24 million a year, which is not just a tragedy but very much unsustainable.

When combined, the numbers of IDPs in three countries alone (n Syria, Iraq and the Democratic Republic of Congo) amount to 40% of IDPs in the world. Evidence from the work of the Women's Refugee Committee shows that 80% of IDPs are Women and Children, usually from the poorest of backgrounds, and have no relation to conflicts in their countries. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, which has also worked on the ground, has evidence that proves that more than a third of all IDPs were displaced in 2014. In 2015, the numbers of IDPs are expected to not only rise but lead to worsening conditions, with knock-on effects on the overall situation of the affected persons.

As specialists have suggested, it is particularly difficult to protect and assist IDPs because, according to international law, governments are held responsible. This view is seen by many as contradictory and presents many difficulties as people are displaced due to internal

conflicts or civil conflicts which means that local governments cannot provide full security. On the other hand, people only move from their homes, leaving behind all their possessions, because they seek security which the government cannot provide. If the government of these IDPs cannot provide security, the international community needs to step in and become a part of the solution.

The collaborative approach and the cluster approach which concentrates any moral international relief responsibility on UN agencies, inter-governmental organisations, the ICRC and International NGOs is not enough. The international community, including states, need to step in, seek and find not only a political solution to internal conflicts, but a humanitarian solution too. The Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD) calls on governments, without exception, to work without expectation of political or economic benefit to help IDPs and provide them with the security that every human being deserves. GNRD has also found that in some cases, where the civil conflict in question is part of a dispute between powerful nations, the work on humanitarian relief is selective and inefficient. The apolitical humanitarian view is mostly not present, which means that it is hard for states to cooperate on providing IDPs with security.

The knock-on effect of IDPs on the number of refugees in the more developed world, on the economy and demographics of neighbouring states and other internal conflicts elsewhere, has pressured many to call for a new approach. The Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD) is officially adding its voice to that of other NGOs and request that the United Nations pass new resolutions with the support of the Security Council to establish an instrument for the protection of IDPs. It is essential that a new approach to protecting IDPs, characterised by cooperation between states, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs is established. A legal and binding instrument that specialises in IDPs should set out the guidelines for protection and relief efforts, specifying the responsibilities and duties of all involved. There should be a categorisation of specialisms which encompass political and conflict resolution, designation of conflict-free zones, provision of emergency relief and implementation of the IDPs' right of return without taking of sides in conflict.